Advisory Council on the Status of Women
Conseil consultatif sur la condition de la femme

Summary of the report

Oppression or Liberation:

Money Matters

by the

New Brunswick Advisory Council on the Status of Women

June, 1991

Moncton, N.B.

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Women have made real progress in the last few decades, particularly in the legal and social spheres. In economic terms however, progress has been much slower. While there are many more women working for pay in New Brunswick, women's income still represents only 45% of men's income, approximately the same percentage as 25 years ago. That figure takes into account not only employment earnings but also government transfers, investment income and all other income, giving an average of $8,467 for women compared to $18,364 for men.

Economic inequalities between men and women have deep historical roots. The organization of labour was conceived by men for men and is based on the traditional division of roles according to sex. Sexual roles are assigned in early childhood in the home and are reinforced in schools, universities, in the workplace and in society.

As early as elementary school, children believe some careers are for men and others for women. As adolescent girls become older, their career and life choices become more and more traditional.

Recommendations:

That the Department of Health and Community Services develop a policy aimed at eliminating stereotypes in day-care centres.

That universities and community colleges ensure that future day-care educators and workers are sensitized to the problems of stereotyping and the means of eliminating them.

That the Department of Education develop a rigorous program to

combat sexism in the school system; that all teachers in the province be required to attend awareness workshops; that training programs for future teachers and guidance counsellors include a mandatory course on sexism; that the Department of Education ensure that all students in the province receive an education free of stereotypes; and that adolescents be made aware of the importance of economic independence for both women and men, and of the need for shared family responsibilities.

THE WAGE GAP

In 1989, New Brunswick was the Canadian province with the widest wage gap between male and female full-time workers. Men earned an average of $31,200 per year. Women earned $19,400, or 62.3% of men's earnings.

Traditionally female occupations are undervalued:

> "Comparing male and female jobs made it clear that women's skills and working conditions were systematically trivialized and ignored. For example, although it takes 1,250 distinct finger movements to type 50 words a minute, typists were seldom given points for manual dexterity. Oil and grease were always considered in assessing the working conditions of men, but blood and worse were forgotten when it came to the working conditions of women health workers. Responsibility for tools was almost invariably rated higher than responsibility for people's well-being or health".

That explains why a social worker earns less than a plumber ($24,620 compared to $25,696) and a kindergarten teacher is paid less than a zoo keeper ($15,000 compared to $17,649).

In 1989, the provincial government recognized the existence of discrimination based on sex and proclaimed the Pay Equity Act. However, the legislation applies only to employees in Part I of the civil service, which includes only 5,000 women, or less than 2% of women in New Brunswick.

The provincial government's recent decision to underpay kindergarten teachers is contrary to the principles of its Employment Standards Act. The Advisory Council lobbied the government to reconsider its decision and pay kindergarten teachers according to the same pay scale as other teachers in the public system.

Recommendations:

That the Pay Equity Act be amended to protect all New Brunswick workers against wage discrimination.

That in accordance with the principles of the Employment Standards Act, kindergarten employees be paid according to the same pay scales as other teachers in the school system.

THE WAGE GAP AND EDUCATION

Women are slighly more educated than men in New Brunswick: men have an average of 11.4 years of schooling while women have 11.8 years. The proportion of female students in colleges and universities has increased consistently in the last decade. In 1976, women represented 22% of college students; today they are 35%. In universities, the proportion of women has gone from 43% to 49%.

The wage gap between men and women tends to decrease in the higher education levels. Women with nine to thirteen years of schooling earn only 40% of what men earn; while women with a university degree earn 56% of what men earn. However, female university graduates earn only as much as male high school graduates.

Women are under-represented in federal training programs. Women represent less than one percent of all apprentices in traditionally male occupations. Women made up only 4% of the clients in the Skills Shortages Program in New Brunswick which trains people in occupations that are in great demand and that pay well. Federal training programs should not be used to further segregate women in traditionally low-paid occupations.

Recommendations:

That the federal government's human resources strategy be based on a full employment strategy and that the allocation of funds be proportional to the levels of poverty within the provinces and disadvantaged groups; that the regional management of training programs be delegated to committees made up not only of employers, but also of representatives of target groups, training institutions and agencies representing target groups, as well as community development officers and government officials involved in promoting social equality.

That the Department of Income Assistance subsidize the real cost of day-care services for the recipients who are in training programs; that low-income families who are presently not receiving social assistance have access to the same training programs and to the financial assistance necessary to pursue the training.

JOB SEGREGATION

The 1986 Census shows that 75% of New Brunswick women are in the same employment sectors as they were 20 years ago, in the clerical, sales, services, health care and education sectors. Only 29% of male workers are employed in these sectors, and they occupy a wider variety of occupations within them.

Even in female-dominated sectors, women are mostly found at the bottom of the ladder, and the higher one looks, the fewer there are. In education, another traditionally female sector, 86% of elementary school teachers are women while only 29% of them occupy administrative positions. In high schools, women constitute 40% of the teaching staff and only 8% of school principal positions. In universities, only 22% of professors are women. Only 7% of New Brunswick women are in management positions compared to 13% of men.

In order to attain economic equality, women will have to enter the same employment categories as men. The Employment Equity Program, established in 1986, is an attempt to eliminate discrimination in the hiring and promotion of women as well as other groups who have traditionally suffered from discrimination. This program applies only to employees in Part I of the provincial civil service, which means a very small proportion of women.

Recommendations:

That the provincial government extend its Employment Equity Program to Parts II, III and IV of the civil service and that it develop incentives for the private sector to do likewise; that the program be administered by a body independent of

government and made up of representatives of women and other target groups, unions and human rights organizations; that the plan of action of each department be made public as well as the results of the program's implementation. That the agency responsible for the implementation of the program have the resources necessary to discipline any department which fails to meet the objectives of the program.

That special efforts be made to include businesswomen on the boards of chambers of commerce and industrial commissions; that a program of mentors be promoted for women who are newly appointed to positions of responsibility; that businesswomen be encouraged to build networks as a means of exchanging information, identifying common problems and finding solutions as a group, in order to foster mutual support in their respective initiatives.

That ACOA and the Research Institute for Regional Economic Development allocate an equitable proportion of their funds to women in business and to research aimed at improving their status.

That the federal transfer payments be maintained at their current level, in order to avoid cuts in social programs that further impoverish poor provinces and individuals.

SEXUAL AND SEXIST HARASSMENT

Sexist harassment is intimidation which is intended to make women adopt stereotypical behaviours, to maintain differing standards and norms according to sex. In a study of women in non-traditional occupations, three out of ten women were subjected to sexist harassment. One out of ten met with some

hostility from co-workers or superiors and one out of ten found her opinions discredited because they came from a woman.

Sexual harassment is even more devastating because it affects a woman's dignity and security. The seriousness of this type of harassment varies, going from the milder forms of intimidation such as leering to threats of sexual violence.

Recommendations:

That universities and community colleges in the province hire women's rights officers with the mandate to report to higher authorities all cases of sexual harassment by employees or students.

That the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission be given sufficient power and resources to initiate investigations and take the necessary disciplinary measures.

HARMONIZING WORK AND FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Women will not attain economic equality as long as they have most of the responsibility of children and of maintaining a household. A Statistics Canada report shows that men take responsibility for only 20% of domestic work, 30% of child care and 10% of elderly care. Only about 50% of men do any domestic work on a daily basis, whether or not they have dependent children. 63% of mothers with preschool children work outside the home, a relatively new phenomenon.

Faced with this scenario, many women decide to work part time or temporarily retire from the work force. This option not only immediately reduces their income but it also compromises

their future earning potential. Almost half of all married women leave the work force for more or less extended periods of time and 70% of them report doing so for family reasons. One of every two married women "chooses" not to work full time. Almost one-third of all female workers work part time. According to the 1986 Census, female part-time workers earn an average of $6,216 per year in New Brunswick.

There is still a large proportion of women who are full-time mothers and wives. The greater the number of children, the more likely women are to be in the "inactive population", according to official statistics. Full-time homemakers are also very vulnerable to poverty in the case of a separation or divorce. At-home mothers are also more likely to be assaulted by their spouse, given that there is an established link between marital violence and rigid traditional roles within the couple. At the end of the marriage, the courts rarely award them more than a couple of years of support to financially recover from all the years invested in the home. That investment benefitted their spouse so he could devote all his energy to his employment.

When the nation's economic growth is measured by evaluating all the goods and services, work done in the home is not taken into account. One recent study shows that the unpaid work done by women for the benefit of their spouse and children represents 40% of the GNP (Gross National Product).

Domestic work should be tabulated in economic terms and included in economic statistics. Without that work, all economic production would come to a halt.

A report published in 1989 by the Conference Board of Canada indicates that the majority of employers believe that a quarter

of all absenteeism and stress-related problems are due to conflicts between work and family responsibilities. Close to 80% of the New Brunswick employees surveyed said that combining work and family responsibilities is a source of stress.

Examples of measures which employers can adopt include on-site day care or assistance through existing day cares, flexible hours of work, leaves of absence and recognition of prior learning.

Recommendations:

That domestic work be recognized in economic terms and included in the GNP as well as in all national economic data.

That the provincial government ensure that parents who work have access to affordable quality day-care services and that it increase its financial contribution to existing services.

That the provincial government develop a consciousness-raising campaign aimed at employers concerning the benefits of helping employees for harmonize family and professional responsiblilities by establishing day-care centres in the workplace or by contributing directly or indirectly to existing day-care services, by offering flexible hours of work, information and counselling services for those experiencing marital problems; these measures should be offered equally to men and women.

That the Employment Standards Act include 10 days paid leave per year for family responsibilities.

That the Department of Labour develop a policy of recognition of prior learning for New Brunswick workers in order to award formal value to skills acquired informally.

DOUBLY DISADVANTAGED WOMEN

Doubly disadvantaged women face additional barriers to economic equality, often beginning with their low levels of self-esteem resulting from society's prejudice against them.

Lone mothers, elderly women, disabled women, francophone women, First Nations women and other visible minority women and immigrant women all face additional barriers.

Recommendations:

That the Employment Standards Act be amended to increase the minimum wage above the poverty level established by Statistics Canada.

That the Employment Standards Act be amended to stipulate that part-time employees and contract workers have a right to the same benefits and pay scales as full-time employees.

That the funding for the Civil Legal Aid Program be increased to ensure that low-income persons have access to justice.

That the Department of Justice require that all support agreements be registered and that the amount of support be based not only on the cost of raising children but also on the loss of income associated with family responsibilities.

That the Department of Income Assistance change the income assistance policies in order to avoid discouraging recipients from improving their status; that rates of assistance be increased to the poverty level established by Statistics Canada.

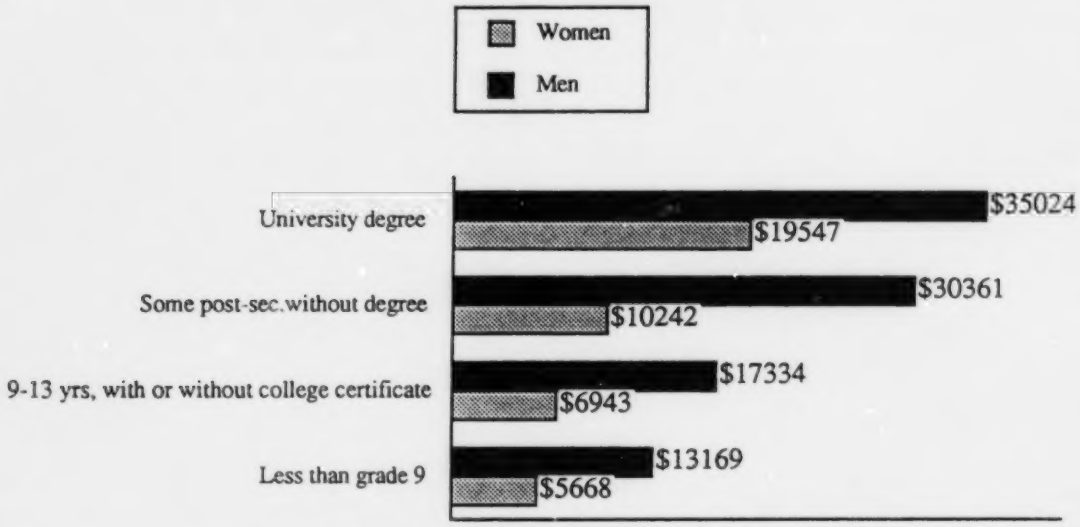
That pensions for the elderly be increased so that elderly women can be financially independent and live in dignity.

That the Department of Health and Community Services offer more assistance to individuals who care for aged parents or disabled children, including respite care to protect caretakers' health.

That the federal government respect its commitment to First Nations women who have been reinstated as status Indians by allotting more money to reserves so that the women may re-enter the reserves.

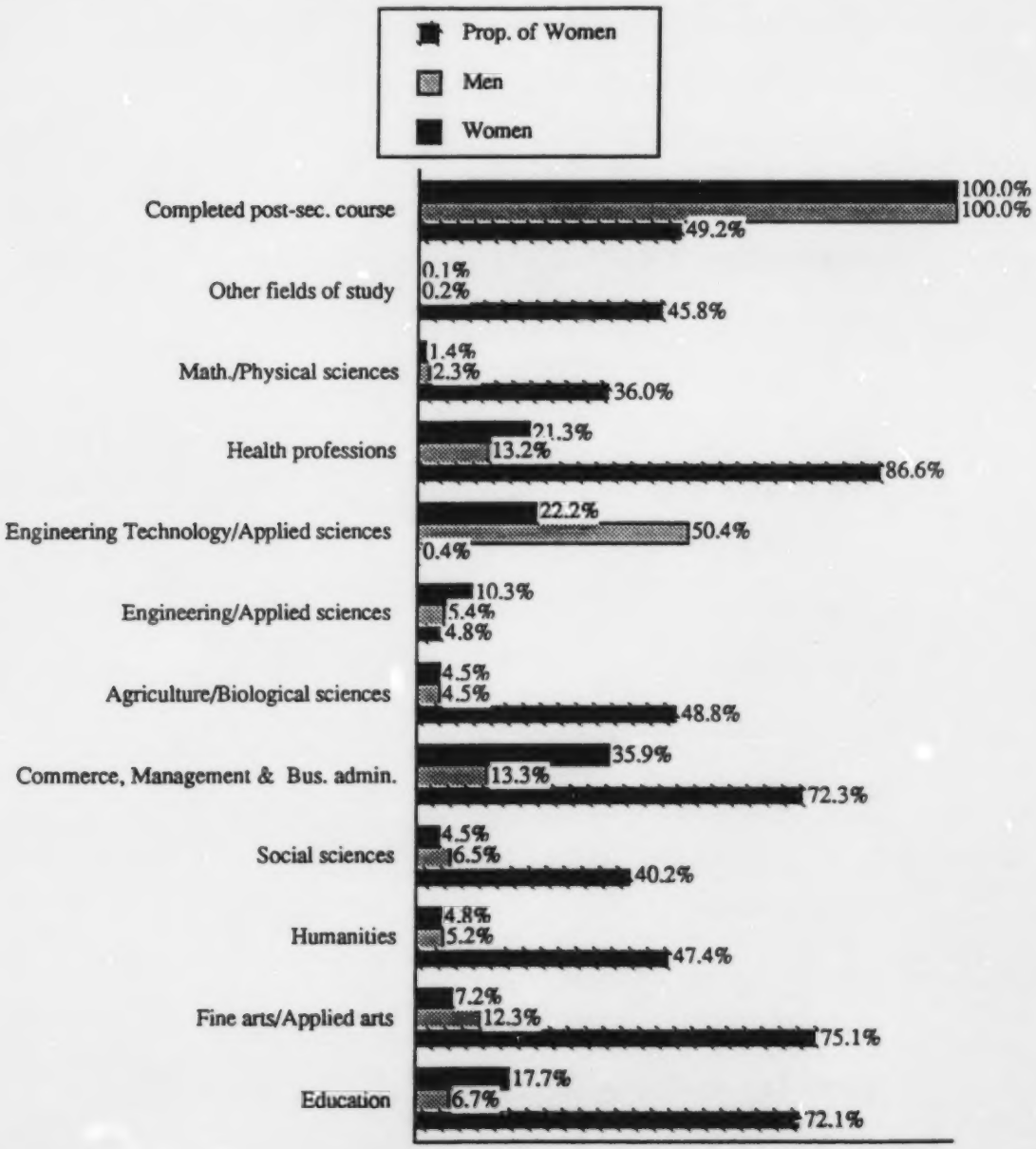
That the federal government ensure that all immigrant women who wish to learn one of the official languages have access to basic language training.

Wage gap according to sex and education, part-time and full time workers, N.B., 1985



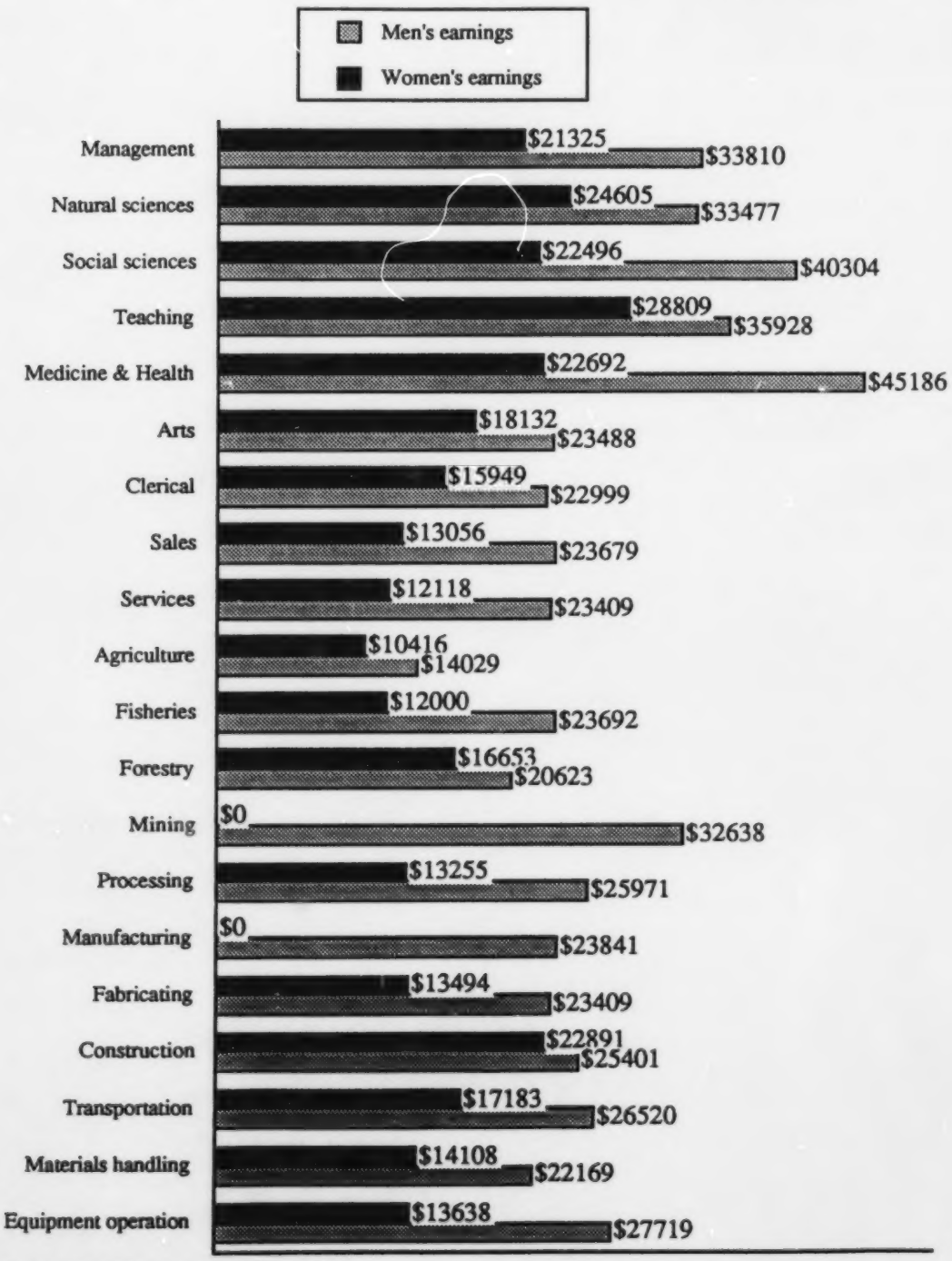
Source: Lafleur, p. 170

Proportion of women in fields of study at the post-secondary level, N.B., 1985



Source: Lafleur, p. 69.

Employment earnings according to sex and occupation, N..B.,1985



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 1986

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The Advisory Council on the Status of Women is a body for study and consultation that was set up to advise the Government of New Brunswick on matters relating to the status of women. The Premier of New Brunswick is the Minister responsible for the status of women.

Ce document est disponible en français.

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"Most Canadian women become poor at some point in their lives. Their poverty is rarely the result of controllable circumstances, and it is seldom the outcome of extraordinary misfortune. In most cases, women are poor because poverty is a natural consequence of the role they are expected to play in our society."

- National Council on Welfare, 1979

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INTRODUCTION

Women have made real progress in the last few decades, particularly in the legal and social spheres. In economic terms however, progress has been much slower. While currently there are many more women working for pay in New Brunswick, women's income still represents only 45% of men's income, approximately the same percentage as 25 years ago. Indeed, in 1986, taking into account employment earnings, government transfers, investment income and all other income, women in New Brunswick had an average total income of $8,467 compared to $18,364 for men.[1]

Why is there still such a wide gap between the financial positions of men and women? Why do most women still find themselves at the bottom of the ladder, when in principle they have the same rights as men to choose a career or to gain employment and promotions?

All sorts of invisible barriers obstruct women's economic independence. Their one common trait is the sexual division of roles. This division of a female world and a male world has such deep historical and cultural roots, and is so firmly fixed in our minds and in our social structures that we often consider it natural and normal. One recent study commented that women don't choose economic dependence, it is forced upon them.[2]

Because sexual inequalities are built into the system, systemic changes will be required for women to attain economic equality. Women themselves, individually and as a group, will have to steadily pursue equal division of work and money.

In the short term, there is no magical solution to the unequal economic status of men and women. Society will introduce practical and efficient remedies only when it realizes that a fairer sharing of work and money encourages women, men, children, institutions and the economy to fully develop their potential.

After a brief historical review, we will look at the obstacles which continue to impede women's economic independence in the areas of training and education, in the workplace and in the family. We will suggest remedies to the problems raised, taking into account women who are doubly disadvantaged.

1. REASONS FROM THE PAST

Economic inequalities between men and women have a long history. The organization of labour was conceived by men for men and is based on the traditional division of roles according to sex. There was a time when most people lived off the land. Women and children were part of the family business and did the tasks associated with agriculture, fishing or farming, while men acted more or less as the head of the business. There was no formal distinction between paid and unpaid work.

Following the industrial revolution and more recently in the postwar period of industrialization, more and more men became employed for pay in the new industries. Unpaid domestic work performed by women and paid outside work done by men became formally divided.

These changes to the structure of the economy led families to move closer to the workplace, thereby creating urban centres. The province's economic life, which was based on the primary sector, or the exploitation of natural resources, changed to include the secondary and tertiary sectors, or the refinement of raw materials and the development of the services sector.

As the economy diversified, it increasingly required a specialized work force. Trades schools and universities began to grow in response to the need for specialized workers. In 1967, the federal government set up the student loan program in order to make post-secondary education accessible to those who had the desire and potential to pursue their education.

Employers began recruiting women in the service sector, having found that women were a well qualified and inexpensive work force. Women entered the labour market because employers needed their labour.[3]

> "It was not until the seventies and eighties, when a vast expansion of clerical and service jobs drew large numbers of women into the labour market, that attitudes toward women in the workplace really started to change."[4]

In 1961, 25% of New Brunswick women were in the work force. Today, that figure is 50% of women.[5] Women have earned the right to work for pay. However, society's attitudes and expectations have not changed significantly with regard to women's and men's roles.

2. SEXISM IN TRAINING

2.1 Socialization of Children

The economic status of women and men is determined in part by their expectations concerning money. Expectations are partly set in childhood. Children imagine their future according to what they see around them.

The differences between the world of girls and that of boys are illustrated by the toys sold for girls and those sold for boys. Boys learn to fight for power and to compete against others; girls learn to be pretty and to play at being a mother. In other words, boys learn independence, and girls, dependence and service to others.

One of the biggest influences on young people is television where stereotypes are rampant:

> "The electronic media, television in particular, have an enormous influence in teaching young people their future roles in the family and in society. Studies of the values the media transmit conclude that they portray women very narrowly either as sexual objects or caregivers to their families. When men are shown playing traditionally female roles such as caring for children or managing households, they are almost always presented either as ridiculous or saintly."[6]

Parents are the child's first model of female and male roles:

> "To the daughters, the mother is the living image of the role of women: these girls interpret their mother's tasks as their future role. The father is similarly a model to his sons."[7]

Those children who come from a lone-parent family or whose mother has returned to school or work, or whose unemployed father takes on a non-traditional role of housework and child care while the mother assumes the role of provider have more chance of learning that it is important and necessary for women as well as men to be self-supporting.[8]

All licensed day-care centres in the province should have a policy aimed at eliminating stereotypes. Children should be encouraged to express their feelings, to resolve conflict by non-aggressive means, to be assertive and to develop a sense of autonomy. All day-care activities should be free of stereotypes. Training programs for day-care workers should include consciousness raising on the issue, as well as on other forms of discrimination whether it is based on appearance, culture, religion, socio-economic status, etc. Early intervention with young children would help prevent the sexual division of roles.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Department of Health and Community Services develop a policy aimed at eliminating stereotypes in day-care centres.

That universities and community colleges ensure that future day-care educators and workers are sensitized to the problems of stereotyping and the means of eliminating them.

2.2 School System

Sexism is also learned in school. A study done by Catalina Ferrer and Simone LeBlanc-Rainville found that schools, as agents of socialization, convey and reinforce dominant values which are those of a "masculinist" culture. Factors which contribute to stereotyping include textbooks and the organization of school curricula as well as the attitudes and practices of teachers and guidance counsellors.

As early as elementary school, children believe some careers are for men and others for women. Boys want to become police officers, athletes, mechanics or firefighters, while girls hope to become nurses, teachers or secretaries.[9] A report by Labour Canada concluded that 93% of boys wanted a traditionally male occupation while 32% of girls aspire to a traditionally female occupation.[10]

The reticence of boys to choose a traditionally female occupation is due in part to the low pay in these occupations and to their being "subordinate" and not "leading" jobs.[11] Boys adopt stereotypical images of masculinity, making it easy for them to relegate girls to "subordinate" roles while they assume "leading" roles.

As adolescent girls become older, their career and life choices become more and more traditional:

> "At the age of fifteen, many adolescents have little knowledge of the world outside their own family and school, but by the age of nineteen they have often gained some experience in the labour force, met a wider circle of friends, and established a relationship which could lead to marriage."[12]

Numerous girls hope to lead a life similar to their mother's and to give priority to their personal life.[13] That expectation is less prevalent among women training in traditionally male occupations; this group anticipates more continuity in their future jobs.[14]

RECOMMENDATION:

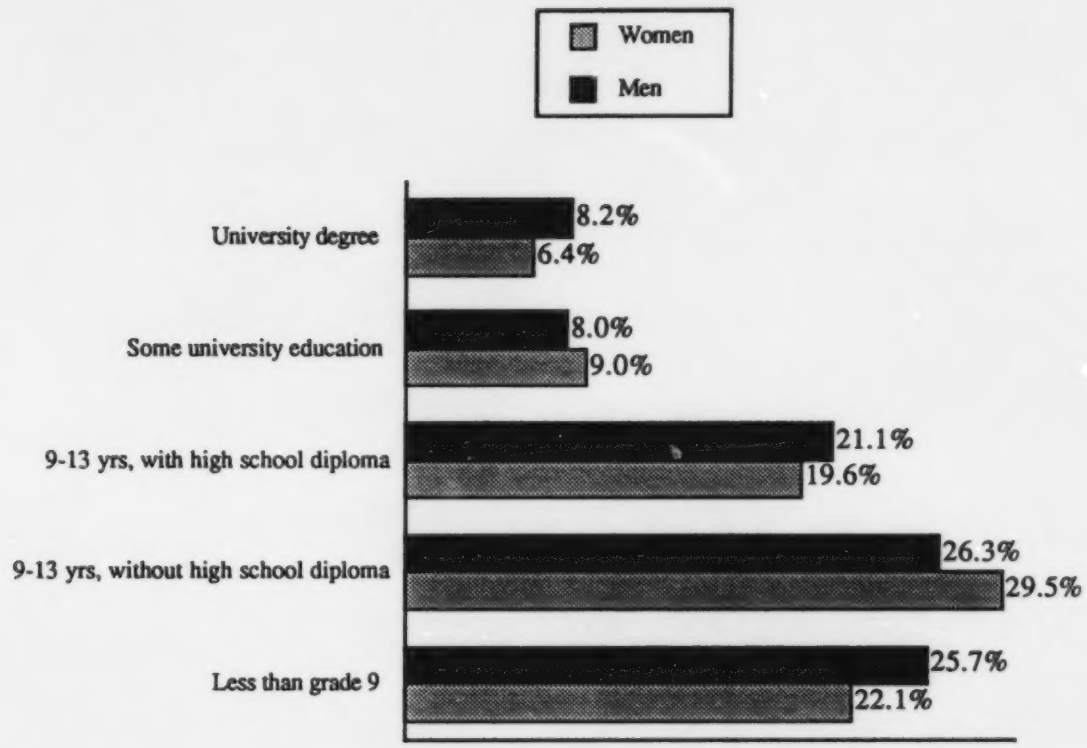
That the Department of Education develop a rigorous program to combat sexism in the school system; that all teachers in the province be required to attend awareness workshops; that training programs for future teachers and guidance counsellors include a mandatory course on sexism; that the Department of Education ensure that all students in the province receive an education free of stereotypes; and that adolescents be made aware of the importance of economic independence for both women and men, and of the need for shared family responsibilities.

2.3 Post-secondary Education

Women are slightly more educated than men in New Brunswick: men have an average of 11.4 years of schooling while women have 11.8 years.[15]

The proportion of female students in colleges and universities has increased consistently in the last decade. In 1976, women represented 22% of college students and today they are 35%; in universities, the proportion of women has gone from 43% to 49%.[16]

Education according to sex, N.B. 1985

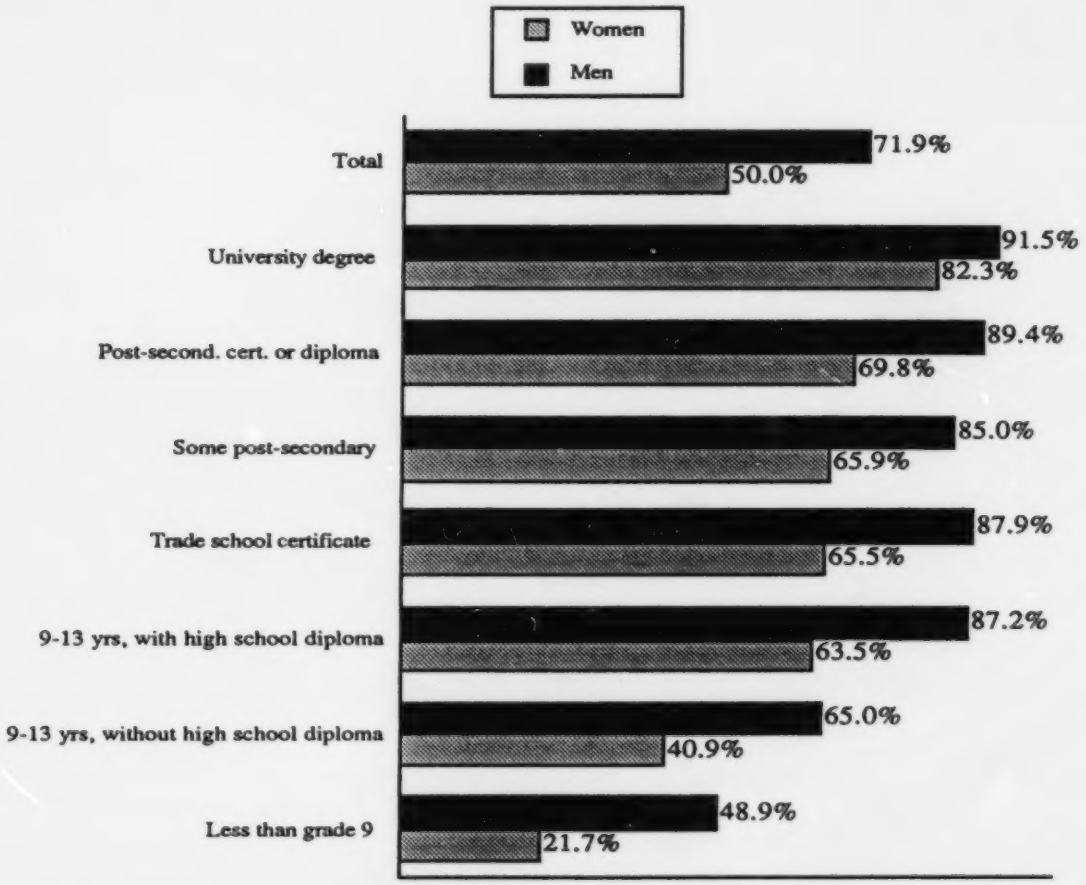


Source: Statistics Canada, Census 1986

This table shows that more men than women have less than nine years of schooling. However, more men than women have a college or university degree.

The more education women have, the higher their participation rate in the work force. However, it is still lower than men's participation rate.

Labour force participation according to sex and education, N.B., 1985

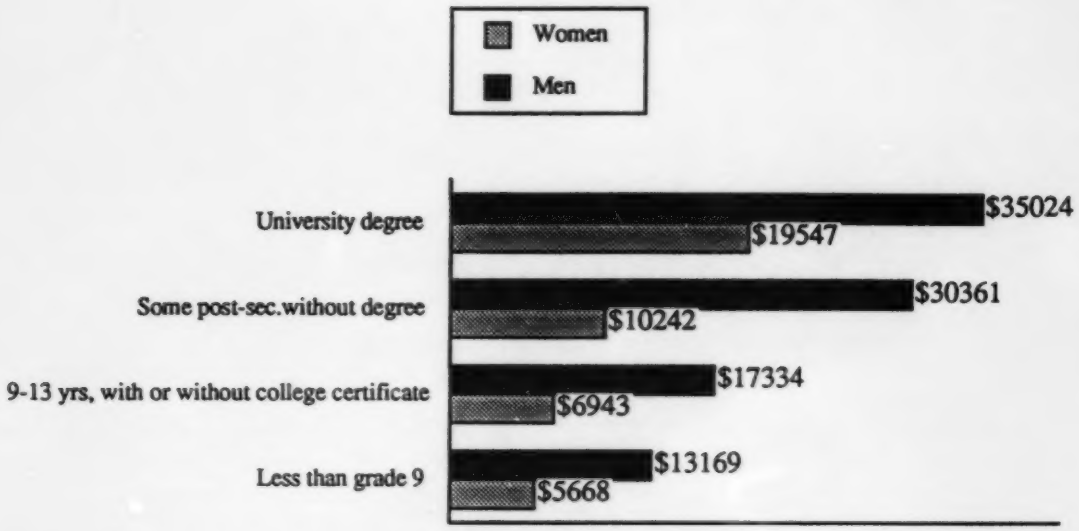


Source: Lafleur, p. 67

Labour force participants include persons working full time, part time and the unemployed. Half of all New Brunswick women are in the labour force. However, in the group of women with less than grade 9, only 21.7% are in the labour force.

The wage gap between men and women also tends to decrease in the higher education levels. Women with nine to thirteen years of schooling earn 40% of what men earn; while women with a university degree earn 56% of what men earn.[17] A comparison of women's and men's income levels according to their level of schooling reveals that female university graduates earn only as much as male high school graduates.[18]

Wage gap according to sex and education, N.B., 1985

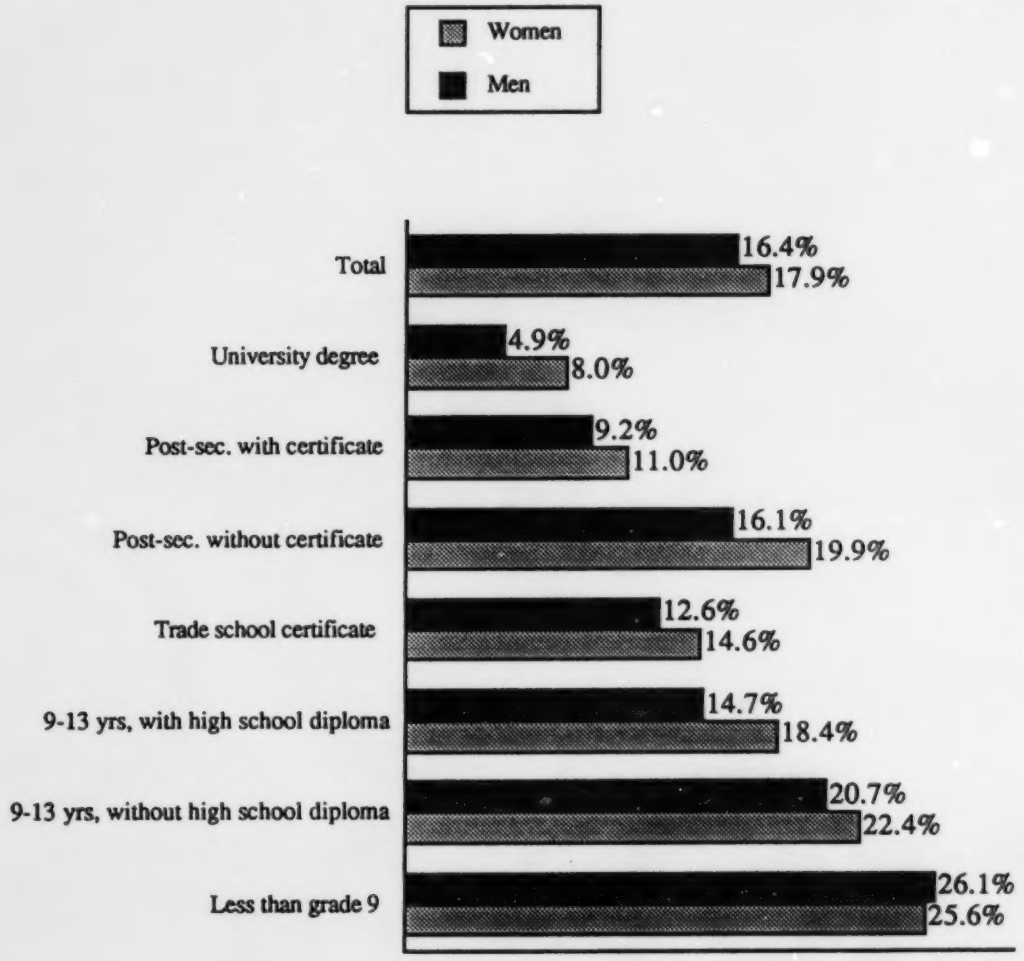


Source: Lafleur, p. 170

Part-time workers are included in this table, which could explain part of the wage gap.

While women with a university degree have a lower unemployment rate than less-educated women, it is in this group that the unemployment gap between men and women is the widest: there are twice as many unemployed university-educated women as there are unemployed university-educated men.[19]

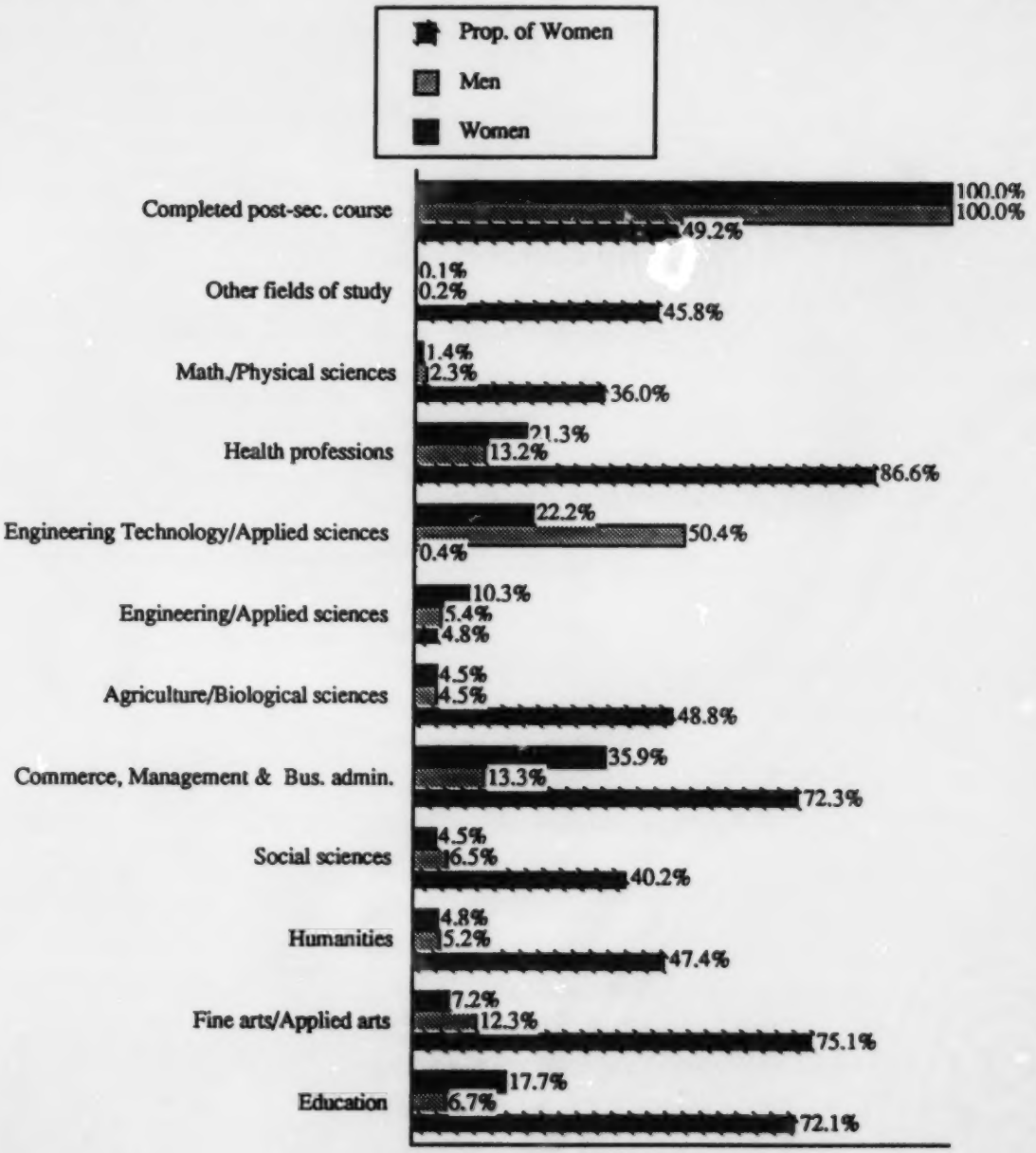
Unemployment rate according to sex and education levels, N.B., 1985



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 1986

Only men with less than nine years of schooling have a higher unemployment rate than women.

Proportion of women in fields of study at the post-secondary level, N.B., 1985



Source: Lafleur, p. 69.

At the university level, women enroll mainly in fields of study which lead to the helping professions, such as family studies and nutrition, nursing, social work and education. Their entry

is slow in the traditionally male fields of study, such as engineering, forestry, law and marketing. However, the proportion of students in Master's programs who are women is increasing relatively fast: from 36% in 1980 to 46% in 1987.[20]

In preparing their recruitment programs, universities should counter sex stereotypes by encouraging women to enroll in traditionally male fields of study and men in traditionally female fields of study. Universities should also support research on the status of women and ensure that feminist theory is included in courses where it is applicable.

At the college level in New Brunswick, the largest group of women is in the secretarial sector. This is the employment sector which pays the least. The highest paying occupational sector, electronics, is male-dominated:

> "By 1987, graduates in electronics, mathematics and computer science had replaced those in health sciences as leaders in earnings ($28,800), but secretarial science graduates maintained their position as the lowest paid workers ($21,500)."[21]

The proportion of office workers who are women continues to increase: in 1971, women represented 68% of office staff; by 1986, they represented 81%.[22] Fully one-third of all New Brunswick women in the labour force are office workers.[23]

The federal government, through Employment and Immigration Canada, provides training programs to adapt the labour force to a changing job market. One of the target groups of these federal programs is women.

However, women are under-represented in these training programs and their participation rate is even lower in some sectors than their participation rate in the labour market. Between January and July 1989, New Brunswick women made up 39.9% of the clientele in the Job Development training program, Employment and Immigration's most expensive training program. That figure is short of women's labour market participation rate.[24] Women represent less than one percent of all apprentices in traditionally male occupations.[25] Women made up only 4% of the clients in the Skills ShortagesProgram in New Brunswick which trains people in occupations that are in great demand and pay well.[26]

As stated by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women, federal training programs should not be used to further segregate women in traditionally low-paid occupations.

The federal government's strategy with regard to human resources development should be accompanied by a policy of full employment. There is a direct link between unemployment and the growth of disadvantaged social classes, both in terms of size and levels of poverty. This constitutes a waste of human resources and is damaging to these groups' potential contribution to the economy.

New Brunswick is a rural and relatively poor province; therefore human resources development strategies must be adapted to our economic reality. Instead of encouraging the unemployed to move to urban and economically healthy centres, we should work to create employment in disadvantaged regions, particularly for disadvantaged groups.

Training programs should serve to bridge the community's needs and resources to those of the individual. Individuals or groups who wish to start businesses should receive special attention to help them realize their goal.

Cooperatives are another formula that should be encouraged. A representative of a group of New Brunswick women who recently set up a cooperative says that cooperatives favour equality and autonomy because they are based on democratic principles and structures. Based on mutual support and encouragement, the cooperative movement promotes the sharing of information and experience. In that sense, they have much in common with traditional female values.[27]

Women who are recipients of social assistance are not well served by the Canadian Jobs Strategy training program. The National Anti-Poverty Organization conducted a survey which showed that female social assistance recipients met with discrimination, sexual harassment and negative stereotypes in the training programs offered to them. Women were steered toward low-paying programs while male social assistance recipients were given training in better-paying sectors such as manufacturing and construction.[28]

The poorest women, rural women and social assistance recipients, have the least access to training programs. Family responsibilities, the absence of child care services and the cost of transportation, meals and clothing are some of the obstacles.[29] The FOCUS program was developed to assist social assistance recipients in overcoming these obstacles; it provides assistance for the additional costs associated with labour market participation. However the courses offered to women are very limited and they do not lead to jobs that provide incomes above the poverty line.

The segregation of women in traditionally female fields of study keeps women in undervalued low-paid jobs.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the federal government's human resources strategy be based on a policy of full employment and that the allocation of funds be proportional to the levels of poverty within the provinces and disadvantaged groups; that the regional management of training programs be delegated to committees made up not only of employers, but also of representatives of target groups, training institutions and agencies representing target groups, as well as community development officers and government officials involved in promoting social equality.

That the Department of Income Assistance subsidize the real cost of day-care services for the recipients who are in training programs; that low-income families who presently are not receiving social assistance have access to the same training programs and to the financial assistance necessary to pursue the training.

3. DISCRIMINATION IN THE LABOUR MARKET

The old values, according to which women's place is limited to the home, cannot withstand the pressures of today's social and economic reality.[30] Women depend on men for economic survival at great risk: statistics indicate that 84% of women can expect to be on their own for a significant part of their lives, either because they are single, separated, divorced or widowed.[31] As for families where both spouses work, it is estimated that the number of families living under the poverty line would almost double if the women left the labour force.[32]

In 1989, New Brunswick was the Canadian province with the widest pay gap between male and female full-time workers. Men earned an average of $31,200 per year while women earned $19,400, or 62.3% of men's earnings.[33]

3.1 Wage Discrimination

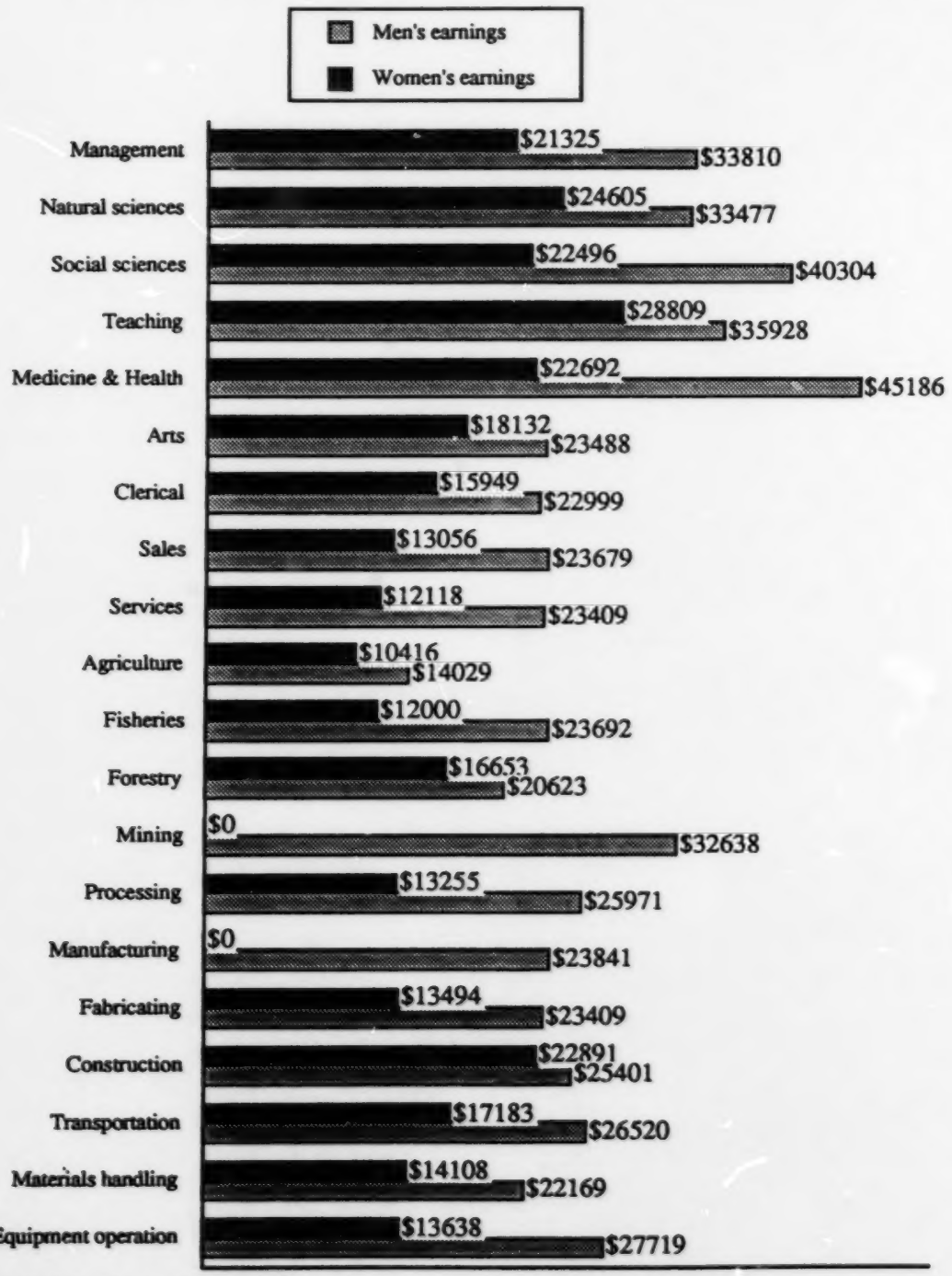
Traditionally female occupations are undervalued:

> "Comparing male and female jobs made it clear that women's skills and working conditions were systematically trivialized and ignored. For example, although it takes 1,250 distinct finger movements to type 50 words a minute, typists were seldom given points for manual dexterity. Oil and grease were always considered in assessing the working conditions of men, but blood and worse were forgotten when it came to the working conditions of women health workers. Responsibility for tools was almost invariably rated higher than responsibility for people's well-being or health."[34]

That explains why a social worker earns less than a plumber ($24,620 compared to $25,696) or that a kindergarten teacher is paid less than a zoo keeper ($15,000 compared to $17,649).[35]

Apart from the fact that "women's jobs" are undervalued and underpaid, women's salaries are lower than men's even when they do the same type of work. For example, 40% of men in management positions earn more than $40,000 per year, compared to only 13% of women.[36]

Employment earnings according to sex and occupation, N..B.,1985



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 1986

This table only includes persons who work full time.

Women in the labour market are segregated in the least secure and lowest paid positions with few or no benefits. That explains why poverty among wage earners increased five times more among women than among men between 1971 and 1986.[37]

3.2 Pay Equity

Equal pay for work of equal value is guaranteed by the Canadian Human Rights Act. It is illegal to underpay women for the work they accomplish simply because they are women.

In 1989, the provincial government recognized the existence of discrimination based on sex and proclaimed the Pay Equity Act. However, the legislation applies only to employees in Part I of the civil service which includes only 5,000 women, or less than 2% of women in New Brunswick.

In order to begin paying its employees according to the value of the work they accomplish, the government is conducting an evaluation of the qualifications, effort, responsibilities and working conditions of certain jobs, using a point system. Job categories where women constitute more than 60% of workers are evaluated and compared to equivalent jobs which men occupy by a proportion of more than 70%. Women's wages would be increased to the equivalent level.

It is not yet known how much of the wage gap between men and women in the civil service will disappear. The program is only in the evaluation phase and pay adjustments will begin in October 1991. Given that the large majority of women in the civil service are at the bottom of the ladder, it is obvious that pay equity alone will not significantly reduce the wage gap between women and men. Generally speaking, it is estimated that pay equity reduces the wage gap by a margin of 15% to 20%, the remaining difference being due to the type of jobs women occupy.[38]

Moreover, the provincial government's recent decision to underpay kindergarten teachers is contrary to the principles of its Employment Standards Act. The Advisory Council urged the government to reconsider its decision and pay kindergarten teachers according to the same pay scale as other teachers in the public school system. Those without a university degree in education should be paid according to their qualifications. This would constitute an affirmation by the government that it seriously believes in the principle of pay equity. By maintaining its decision, the government is giving the message to other employers that discrimination can be justified.

In fact, as long as the government does not force the private sector to pay women according to the

value of the work they do, it is indirectly sanctioning sex discrimination

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Pay Equity Act be amended to protect all New Brunswick workers against wage discrimination.

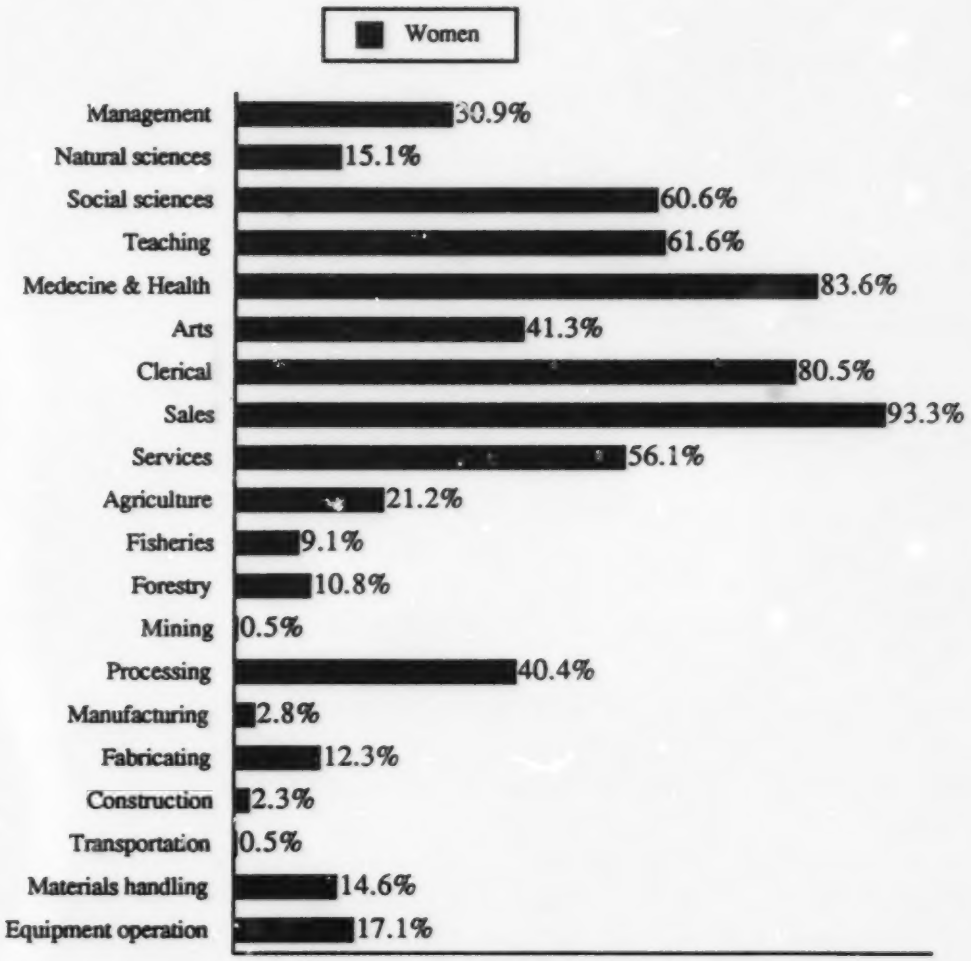
That in accordance with the principles of the Employment Standards Act, kindergarten employees be paid according to the same pay scales as other teachers in the school system.

3.3 Segregation of the Sexes in the Labour Market

Stereotypes are very much in evidence in the workplace, where a majority of workers, both male and female, consider that there are women's jobs and men's jobs.[39]

The 1986 Census shows that 75% of New Brunswick women are in the same employment sectors as they were 20 years ago. They are mainly employed in the clerical, sales, services, health care and education sectors. These traditionally female occupations are "an extension of women's role as wife and mother", roles which are undervalued in our contemporary social organization.[40] Only 29% of male workers are employed in these sectors, and they occupy a wider variety of occupations within them.[41]

Proportion of women by occupation, N.B., 1985



Source: Lafleur, p. 128.

The easy thing to do would be to blame women individually for their unenviable position in the work force. To do sowould be to disregard women's socialization as well as the numerous obstacles they face when trying to improve their status in the labour market.

Even though women are better educated than men, their qualifications are equal to men's and, in principle, jobs are equally open to female and male applicants there remains a certain bias against the hiring of women. Employers have different expectations of job applicants based on whether

they are male or female.

When women try to enter traditionally male jobs, invisible obstacles turn up to prevent them from getting the jobs. A recent study of women in non-traditional occupations indicates that the fewer women there are in a given occupation, the more sexist the attitudes within that occupation. Faced with equally qualified men and women, it often happens that women's qualifications are undervalued. This is never said officially, and this type of discrimination is therefore more difficult to oppose.

Even in female-dominated sectors, women are mostly found at the bottom of the ladder; the higher one looks, the fewer there are. For example, women represent 84% of all health care workers in New Brunswick, but only 36% of hospital board members.[42] In education, another traditionally female sector, 86% of elementary school teachers are women while only 29% of them occupy administrative positions. In high schools, women constitute 40% of the teaching staff and only 8% of school principal positions.[43] In universities, only 22% of professors are women and to our knowledge, only one woman has occupied (by interim) the president's chair.[44] Only 7% of New Brunswick women are in management positions compared to 13% of men.[45]

There exists a prejudice that women are less capable leaders than men, less assertive and overly influenced by their emotions rendering them unfit for such responsibilities. It is also alleged that women are not interested in promotions due to a lack of ambition. This is not based on fact: women are more interested in promotions than men are.[46] A recent federal government report confirms the existence of these sexist attitudes which hinder the advancement of women. The report speaks of sly tactics used to prevent women from obtaining promotions, such as depriving women of information, denigrating them at every opportunity or expressing outright hostility towards women.

3.4 Employment Equity

In order to attain economic equality, women will have to enter the same employment categories as men. The Employment Equity Program, established in 1986, is an attempt to reach that objective. Its aim is to eliminate discrimination in the hiring and promotion of women as well as other groups who have traditionally suffered from discrimination.

The Employment Equity Program is an equal opportunity program, as well as an efficient system of human resources management. The goal is to bring about an equitable representation of target groups in all categories of employment.

This program applies only to employees in Part I of the provincial civil service, which means a very small proportion of women. The provincial government itself is responsible for managing the program and assessing results. The program does not provide a mechanism for effective monitoring. The New Brunswick Federation of Labour said in 1987 that it considered that there was conflict of interest since the equity program is managed by government rather than by a third party.

This may explain in part the slow progress achieved since the program's implementation. The proportion of women has only increased to 38.2% from 37.2% between 1984 and 1988, while the proportion of New Brunswick women in the labour force generally is at 40%. Wage differences between women and men are not being reduced any faster with the program than before its implementation.[47] In 1988, 59% of women earned less than $25,000 per year, compared to only 30% of men.[48]

The wage gap between women and men in the New Brunswick civil service is considerable. This is due in large part to the lower ranked positions women occupy. According to the Pay Equity Bureau, 80% of women in the provincial civil service are in traditionally female occupations. In other words, a large majority of them are in clerical positions. There are no provisions to bring departments into line when they fail to respect the objectives of the Employment Equity Program.

In order to make the program effective, it should be managed by an independent body with representation from the target groups and the unions representing the employees. Each department's plan of action should be made public, as well as an annual report of progress made. Those departments that fail to do what is necessary to hire and promote women should be subject to disciplinary measures.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the provincial government extend its Employment Equity Program to Parts II, III and IV of the civil service and that it develop incentives for the private sector to do likewise; that the program be administered by a body independent of government and made up of representatives of women and other target groups, unions and human rights organizations; that the plan of action of each department be made public as well as the results of the program's implementation. That the agency responsible for the implementation of the program have the resources necessary to discipline any department which fails to meet the objectives of the program.

3.5 Sexual and Sexist Harassment

Women who clear the sexist obstacles in the hiring process may face hostility from colleagues or superiors, after obtaining the desired position.

Sexist harassment is intimidation which is intended to make women adopt stereotypical behaviours and to maintain differing standards and norms according to sex.[49]

Although this type of harassment can take different forms, the goal is always the same, that is to put the targetted woman in a position of inferiority. It can be verbal or non-verbal and can include intimidating looks, negative remarks concerning women in general, sexist jokes, an over-protective attitude or false flattery. It is done to control women, to bring them to belittle themselves, to create a climate of anxiety and awkwardness, making it difficult to retain one's self-esteem.

In a study of women in non-traditional occupations, three out of ten women were subjected to sexist harassment. One out of ten got a poor welcome by co-workers or superiors and one out of ten found her opinions discredited because they came from a woman.[50]

While sexist harassment is harmful in personal terms as well as costly in terms of productivity, sexual harassment is even more devastating for women because it affects their dignity and security. The seriousness of this type of harassment varies, from the milder forms of intimidation such as leering to threats of sexual violence.

What could be considered appropriate behaviour in certain circumstances becomes inappropriate when the intention is to exert power over women. Women are treated as sexual objects.

Men who harass from a position of authority can easily abuse their power by offering promotions to women who comply while threatening to fire those who complain. Sexual harassment is defined as sex discrimination and prohibited by the New Brunswick Human Rights Act. But more often than not, women do not complain to the Human Rights Commission because this behaviour is considered to be intimate in nature and because it is trivialized. They are afraid that their complaint will be ridiculed, that there will be reprisals, that their reputation will be negatively affected or that their co-workers' and the harasser's reactions. Many prefer leaving their employment to fighting for respect.

It is difficult to ascertain how many women are sexually harassed in the workplace. Many would not admit to such treatment. The study of women in non-traditional occupations indicated that one in ten women admitted to having been severely harassed sexually.[51] Other more general studies of

women in the labour market report that between 49% to 88% of women have been victims of such abuse of power.[32] It's quite obvious that sexual harassment undermines women's well-being as well as their productivity. One study on the victimization of women says that:

> "Sexual harassment cripples many women's careers and is a serious barrier to all women's hopes for job equality."[33]

The New Brunswick Human Rights Commission should have more power. For example, the Commission should be empowered to initiate investigations on its own and have the power to apply sanctions which can be legally enforced in cases of discrimination including harassment.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That universities and community colleges in the province hire women's rights officers with the mandate to report to higher authorities all cases of sexual harassment by employees or students.

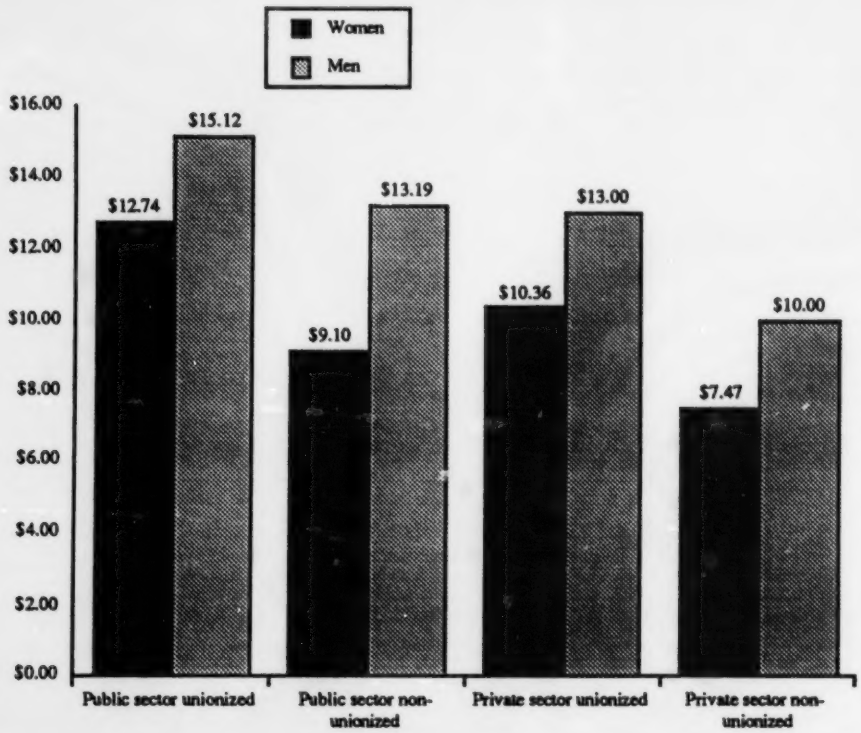
That the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission be given sufficient power and resources to initiate investigations and take the necessary disciplinary measures.

3.6 Unionization

There are twice as many male workers who are unionized in New Brunswick as there are women. While sexism can also be found in the labour movement, the fact is that unionized women are able to negotiate better working conditions, more benefits and better employee protection.

Only 24% of female employees are unionized[34] and the majority of them are civil servants.[35] The only protection non-unionized workers have is what is guaranteed by the Employment Standards Act. Although there is a wage gap between unionized women and men, these women are generally better paid than their non-unionized sisters and the wage gap is not as wide as for non-unionized workers:

Hourly wage for unionized and non-unionized workers, N.B., 1986



Source: National Union of Provincial Government Employees, 1989.

This data tells us that the wage gap is widest between non-unionized men and women in the public service. Many of these work part time or in contract positions in the civil service. Evidently, the burden of such "budgetary restraint measures" is carried mainly by women.

RECOMMENDATION:

That unions and professional associations ensure that men and women are equally represented on their boards and committees and that special attention be given to family responsibilities and sexism.

3.7 Male Organization of the Labour Market

Men in decision-making positions are used to being among men. When a woman joins their rank, they sometimes physically or psychologically exclude her from their network. This way of doing things, called the "old boys' network", has been identified as one of the invisible obstacles to women's equality in the workplace, particularly by women in the federal public service[56] and by female managers in the private sector.[57]

According to the Task Force on Barriers to Women in the Public Service, men share information in informal settings from which women are absent. Women are subtly excluded from that part of the decision-making process which often takes place in the backrooms. Meetings only serve to officialize decisions made by the "old boys' network".

Because of sexist attitudes, women are often assigned the less interesting tasks presenting few challenges. There is little opportunity for women to develop their skills, to prove themselves, to make themselves visible and to be promoted.[58] This diminishes their motivation at work and results in the under-utilization of their capabilities, to the detriment of the employer.

Women in positions of authority often have to abandon their way of doing things and function as men in order to be considered competent:

> "You have to make sure that you behave in an acceptable manner by a man's standards. We are still in a male-dominated era."[59]

Men organize their work environment based on control and autonomy, while women emphasize communication and human relations. Women are more comfortable with team work than with the hierarchal system. As the National Centre for Management Research and Development says on the issue:

> "Some women do make attempts to function like men, are successful at it, and experience little distress. Others make attempts to function like men, are successful at it for a time, then drop out or get "sick". Others have great difficulty "fitting in", and drop out early. Apart from the anxiety and personal sense of failure that many women experience when they feel that they do not fit the corporate ideals and values, there is a potentially greater loss for the organizations in which they work and for society as a whole... The status quo continues to be maintained and the possibilities of a healthier experience for both men and women are curtailed."[60]

New models of management now being discovered are designed to foster participation and cooperation within the workplace rather than competition and the hierarchal process. The application of this traditionally feminine way of organizing work would result in a more humane workplace.

Several studies have established a link between economic structures built on the exploitation of natural and human resources and pollution of the environment and exploitation of women's labour.[61] The present economic crisis is the result of the imbalance created by the over-exploitation of natural and human resources. It leads to a shrinking of the middle class and a polarization of the classes: on the one hand, there are the rich who hold the "good" jobs, and on the other, the poor who hold the "bad" jobs.[62] This undermines the state of the economy and in the long term, society as a whole.[63] According to experts attending a recent conference organized by the Canadian Council on Social Development, the only way to overcome the present economic recession is to adopt social equity measures.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That special efforts be made to include businesswomen on the boards of chambers of commerce and industrial commissions; that a program of mentors be promoted for women who are newly appointed to positions of responsibility; that businesswomen be encouraged to build networks as a means of exchanging information, identifying common problems and finding solutions as a group, in order to foster mutual support in their respective initiatives.

That ACOA and the Research Institute for Regional Economic Development allocate an equitable proportion of their funds to women in business and to research aimed at improving their status.

That the federal transfer payments be maintained at their current level, in order to avoid cuts in social programs that further impoverish poor provinces and individuals.

4. UNEQUAL SHARING OF FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

A Statistics Canada report shows that, despite women's greater participation rate in the labour market, men take responsibility for only 20% of domestic work, 30% of child care, 10% of elderly care and 40% of unpaid (volunteer) community work.[64]

Only about 50% men do any domestic work on a daily basis, regardless of whether or not they have dependent children. Even when their spouse works full time outside the home, men devote only a few more minutes per day to family responsibilities.[65] Yet, family responsibilities are recognized in the Marital Property Act and in the Divorce Act as being the responsibility of both spouses.

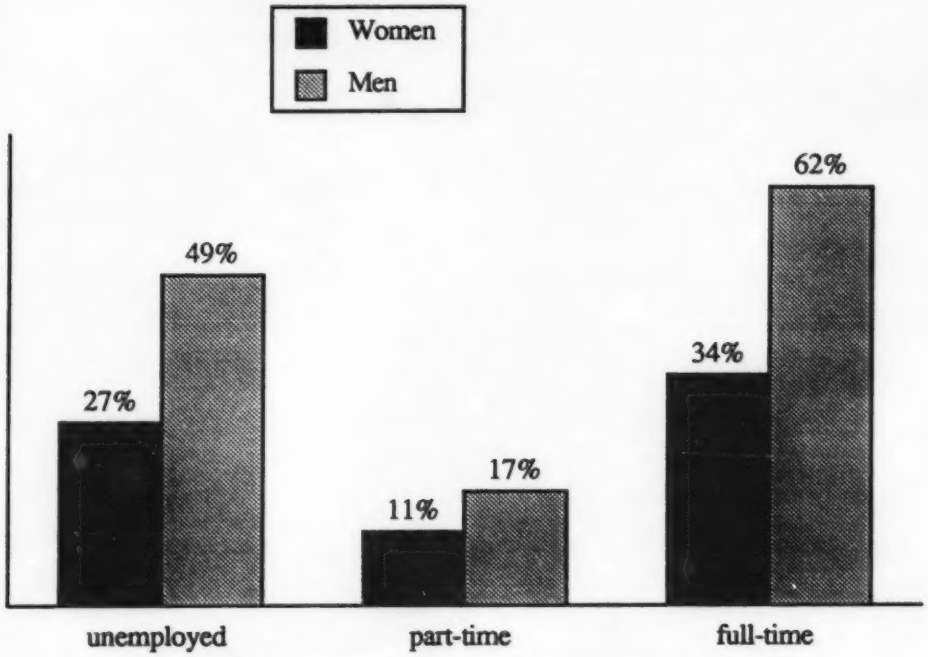
A 1989 Gallup poll of 1051 men and women reported that most men are favourable to their wife holding a job outside the home as long as she continues to do the housework and take care of the children.[66] The same poll shows that most Canadian men still believe that women's work outside the home is harmful to the family. Yet, they don't consider their own work outside the home to be harmful to their family. On the contrary, they consider themselves, as does the rest of society, good fathers who take their role as providers seriously.

It is even more disturbing to realize that many young people also blame mothers who work outside the home. A 1987 Gallup poll of 2,100 youth aged 15-24 years shows that 59% of young men and 42% of young women say that women's work outside the home is probably harmful to preschool children. At the same time, the survey reports that the same young people believe that women should have the same employment opportunities as men.[67]

Evidently, women are expected to spend more time with their children than men are. The greater expectations with regards to the physical presence of mothers with their children is another indirect cause of women's economic inequality.

4.1 The Consequences of Unequal Sharing

Labour market participation according to sex, N.B., 1985



Source: Statistics Canada, Census 1986

Faced with this unequal sharing of family responsibilities, women have few options. They can assume the double workload, attempting to be equally devoted to their career and their family. This is what more and more New Brunswick women are doing.

Indeed, 63% of mothers with preschool children work outside the home.[68] This is a relatively new phenomenon and it explains in large part the increased participation rate of women in the labour market. But the scarcity of quality day-care services as well as the high proportion of women's earnings that are taken up to cover the cost of day care are problems rarely experienced by men.

Even when women do have access to affordable quality day care, it doesn't eliminate problems such as a sick child, the need to work overtime or the dilemma of accepting a promotion requiring greater availability at work. Women cannot always give as much of themselves in their jobs as they would like to because they are responsible for much more than half of the family

responsibilities. This double workday undermines their quality of life because the resulting fatigue and stress weakens their physical and mental health. The unequal division of home responsibilities is also a frequent source of conflict for couples.

Faced with this scenario, many women decide to work part time or temporarily retire from the work force. These options not only immediately reduce their income but they also compromise future earning potential. Almost half of all married women leave the work force for more or less extended periods of time and 70% of them report doing so for family reasons.[69] One of every two married woman "chooses" not to work full time.[70] Almost one-third of all female workers work part time. According to the 1986 Census, female part-time workers earn an average of $6,216 per year in New Brunswick while women who work full time earn an average of $17,931 per year.[71]

There is still a large proportion of women who are full-time mothers and wives. The greater the number of children, the more likely women are to be in the "inactive population", according to official statistics. Full-time homemakers are also very vulnerable to poverty in the case of a separation or divorce. According to a National Council on Welfare report, at-home mothers face such risks that it should make us want to steer young women away from the occupation.[72] At-home mothers are also more likely to be assaulted by their spouse, given that there is an established link between marital violence and rigid traditional roles within the couple.[73] At the end of the marriage, the courts rarely award them more than a couple of years of support to financially recover from all the years invested in the home. That investment benefitted their spouse so he could devote all his energy to his employment.

The current low birth rate is easily understood from women's point of view. According to a National Council on Welfare report on women's poverty, what is amazing is that so many women continue to have children at a time when motherhood carries such a high cost.[74]

Marriage impoverishes women, mainly because it discourages them from investing in their own financial independence while encouraging greater work force participation by men. The labour force participation rate is 64% among single men and 78% among married men compared to 56% for single women and 53% for married women.[75]

The wage gap between women and men according to their marital status is even more revealing. In 1988, married women earned only 50% of what married men earned while single women earned 85% of what single men earned.[76] In economic terms, those figures clearly show that marriage is an excellent financial deal for men and a bad one for women. Many women are forced to "tolerate the intolerable for fear of want".[77]

4.2 Making Domestic Work Visible

When we calculate the amount of work done by women, including work accomplished both within and outside the home, women's work week is longer than men's.

When the nation's economic growth is measured by evaluating all the goods and services, work done in the home is not taken into account. One recent study shows that the unpaid work done by women for the benefit of their spouse and children represents 40% of the GNP (Gross National Product).[78]

Domestic work should be tabulated in economic terms and included in economic statistics such as the GNP. Without that work, all economic production would come to a halt. Economic production "covers the whole range of human activities devoted to the creation, with limited resources, of goods and services capable of satisfying human wants".[79] It is important that women's commitment to family responsibilities be made visible and that men be encouraged to do their fair share.

RECOMMENDATION:

That domestic work be recognized in economic terms and included in the GNP as well as in all national economic data.

4.3 Harmonizing Work and Family Responsibilities

Women will not attain economic equality as long as they have most of the responsibility of children and of maintaining a household.[80] Family and professional responsibilities must be made more compatible through the implementation of practical measures for the benefit of both men and women. If such measures are directed at women only, they would lead to an even wider gap between the sexes. The goal must be to allow women to invest as much as men in the labour market instead of facilitating women's partial or temporary retreat from the labour force.

A report published in 1989 by the Conference Board of Canada indicates that the majority of employers believe that a quarter of all absenteeism and stress-related problems are due to conflicts between work and family responsibilities. According to the employees themselves, at least those in New Brunswick, 78% to 80% of respondents said that combining work and family responsibilities is a source of stress.[81]

Employers who offer assistance with employees' family responsibilities do so because they then find it easier to recruit and keep their employees. It reduces stress, improves morale and lowers the rate of absenteeism.[82]

Here are examples of measures which could be adopted:

a) Day-care services

One of the better ways to encourage women's financial independence is to establish a network of quality day-care centres which are affordable and geographically accessible. Given that human reproduction is necessary for the economy, women shouldn't have to bear most of the cost. This responsibility must be shared by the state and employers.

According to the Minister responsible for the status of women in Canada, the federal government intends to establish a day-care program before the end of its mandate.[83] The provincial government should lobby the federal government for action. It should also increase its own funding for existing facilities and encourage the private sector to do its share.

b) Other services to parents

Some employers offer day-care services in the workplace; others offer assistance through existing day-care centres. Certain employers offer information and paging services, assistance to parents when children are ill, and seminars for parents, as well as day-care services.

c) Shorter work week

At present, the Employment Standards Act stipulates that employees must be paid at the overtime minimum wage rate for those hours exceeding 44 hours of work in a week. The Act should be amended to reduce that number to 40 hours per week.

d) Flexible hours of work

Flexible work hours allows parents to adapt their schedule to make work more compatible with family life. For example, the work week can be compressed or work can be done from the home.

Flex-time should be made available to both men and women.

e) Part-time work

Parents who wish to spend more time with their children and avoid the double workday have the option of working part time. However, fathers should be encouraged to do this as much as mothers. The benefit for employers is an enhanced ability to manage human resources according to demand. The Employment Standards Act should guarantee part-time workers the same hourly wage and the same benefits as full-time workers.

f) Leaves of absence

Most employers offer bereavement leave, as well as time off to compensate for overtime. Some offer educational leaves for professional development and special leaves for family responsibilities. But in most cases, these leaves are authorized informally and are not recognized officially as policy.

In order to ensure uniform access to these leaves, they should be guaranteed in the New Brunswick Employment Standards Act. Parental leaves and leaves for family responsibilities should be included in the Employment Standards Act to ensure that women and men who temporarily leave their employment for family responsibilities are not penalized.

The Employment Standards Act should also guarantee to natural parents and adoptive parents, the same unpaid parental leave with no loss of seniority and benefits. The Act, in accordance with the Unemployment Insurance Act, should entitle women to maternity leave with no loss of seniority or benefits.

g) Information and counselling

Certain large employers offer assistance programs to their employees. For example, counselling services can be made available for problems such as alcoholism and drug dependency or stress caused by marital problems, etc. Some employers purchase these services from outside agencies.

h) Displacement assistance

In order to encourage employee mobility, some employers pay for moving expenses including assistance to the accompanying spouse in their search for employment.

i) Recognition of prior learning

Not all knowledge is acquired in school or in paid employment and for that reason, a policy of recognition of prior learning should be adopted. This would help women who wish to re-enter the job market by making it possible to transfer the skills acquired through work in the home and in volunteer organizations to job requirements and admission criteria in educational institutions. The Université de Moncton has already adopted a policy of recognition of prior learning and community colleges are in the process of developing a policy.

Research shows that work satisfaction is linked to the level of harmony between work and family life.[34] The more equal the contribution of men and women to work and home, the more satisfying both will be for everyone.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the provincial government ensure that parents who work have access to affordable quality day-care services and that it increase its financial contribution to existing services.

That the provincial government organize a consciousness-raising campaign aimed at employers concerning the benefits of helping employees to harmonize family and professional responsibilities by establishing day-care centres in the workplace or by contributing directly or indirectly to existing day-care services, by offering flexible hours of work or a reduced work week, information and counselling services for those experiencing marital problems; these measures should be offered equally to men and women.

That the Employment Standards Act be amended to include 10 days paid leave per year for family responsibilities, and to stipulate that employees be paid at the overtime wage rate after 40 hours of work in a week instead of 44 hours.

That the Department of Labour develop a policy of recognition of prior learning for New Brunswick workers in order to award formal value to skills acquired informally.

5. DOUBLY DISADVANTAGED WOMEN

We have examined the barriers New Brunswick women face when attempting to attain economic equality in relation to men. Certain groups of women face additional barriers. Minority women are poorer and suffer from discrimination based on their sex and their minority status.

These women are not insensitive to society's prejudice against them: as a result, they face the additional barrier of low self-esteem. When employers and teachers treat them as second-class citizens, their chances of improving their financial situation are further reduced. These women are vulnerable to various forms of abuse and their poverty denies them access to the justice system.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Employment Standards Act be amended to increase the minimum wage above the poverty level established by Statistics Canada.

That the Employment Standards Act be amended to stipulate that part-time employees and contract workers have a right to the same benefits and pay scales as full-time employees.

That funding for the Civil Legal Aid Program be increased to ensure that low-income persons have access to justice.

5.1 Lone Mothers

We know that half of all women are not in the paid labour force, compared to 28% of men, and that those with employment income receive only 55% of men's employment income.[85] When women find themselves without a spouse and with dependent children, 75% of them live in poverty. On average, New Brunswick lone mothers must live with only 59% of what Statistics Canada considers the minimum income required for basic necessities such as food, clothing and housing. In no other Canadian province are lone mothers so deprived.[86]

Paternal responsibilities, just like maternal responsibilities, do not end with separation or divorce. As the number of lone mothers increases, it is becoming more and more evident that all support agreements must be automatically registered with family courts and that enforcement measures must be taken in cases of default. Non-custodial fathers must pay their fair share of the cost of

raising children, including financial compensation to the mother who takes on most of the parental responsibilities. The loss of potential income associated with those responsibilities should be taken into consideration when calculating the amount of support, as is recommended by the National Council on Welfare.[87]

For mothers who live on financial assistance, government subsidies should cover the real cost of day-care services so that women can take the necessary steps towards economic independence. The rates of financial assistance should be increased to the poverty line. To force recipients to survive with only 45% of the income considered necessary[88] for basic needs is to place them in an unbearable, degrading and harmful situation, denying them the personal development they and their children need. Every effort should be made to ensure that the training they receive answers their needs and prepares them for real, well-paid jobs.

The provincial government should bring changes to the income assistance program, eliminating those rules that discourage recipients from increasing their income. For example, instead of allowing a fixed amount of earnings without penalty, the assistance levels should be gradually reduced as the earnings increase.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

That the Department of Justice require that all support agreements be registered and that the amount of support be based not only on the cost of raising children but also on the loss of income associated with family responsibilities.

That the Department of Income Assistance change the income assistance policies in order to encourage recipients to improve their status; that rates of assistance be increased to the level of the poverty line established by Statistics Canada.

5.2 Elderly Women

Women live on average seven years longer than men. When they survive their spouse, they are often unprepared to be financially independent. Unlike men, many haven't worked outside the home and do not have retirement pension plans. Often, the only source of income for women over 65 years of age is the Old Age Security pension. In New Brunswick, these women have an average yearly income of $9,524. Women between the ages of 55 and 64 are even worse off. According to the 1986 Census, their income was $7,398 per year.[89]

Many elderly women do not have the financial means to live in their own home. The result is that they are uprooted and consequently precipitated into a state of deteriorating health. Those who live with their children or in special care homes are vulnerable to financial, psychological and sometimes physical abuse. Furthermore, the provision of special care is and will continue to be an increasing financial burden for the province.

RECOMMENDATION:

That pensions for the elderly be increased so that elderly women can be financially independent and live in dignity.

5.3 Disabled Women

According to the generally accepted definition, the disabled person is one whose abilities are limited either physically or mentally. They may have been born with their disability or they may have acquired it later as a result of an accident, an illness or other difficult circumstances.

Disabled persons constitute 16% of the population in New Brunswick and 30,000 of them are women.[90] On the national level, only 22% of disabled women work for pay[91], although 65% of them want to work. A report prepared by the Disabled Women's Network states that most employers are reluctant to change their attitudes or adapt the work environment to accommodate disabled women. According to this study, half of all disabled women suffer from discrimination.[92]

The new focus on community living rather than institutionalized care has meant that it is mainly women who are expected to offer special care, often with insufficient or no government help.

Disabled women are more often without a spouse than disabled men. In fact, almost 75% of disabled men live with a spouse compared to only 50% of disabled women.[93] There are few available resources for disabled women to develop their autonomy or their abilities in order to participate more fully in their communities. The majority of them live under the poverty line.[94]

RECOMMENDATION:

That the Department of Health and Community Services offer more assistance to individuals who care for aged parents or disabled children, including respite care to protect caretakers' health.

5.4 Francophone Women

A study published by the New Brunswick chapter of Action Education Femmes reports significant inequalities between francophone and anglophone women in New Brunswick. Francophones constitute 32% of the provincial population and are concentrated in the northern part of the province.[95] English-speaking New Brunswickers live mainly in urban areas where the economic conditions are more favourable, while the majority of francophones are found in rural areas where employment opportunities are scarce. In general, anglophone women are better educated than francophone women. But even when their levels of education are the same, francophone women earn less than their anglophone counterparts.[96]

On the other hand, francophone women are more likely to be bilingual, which increases earning potential. In 1985, unilingual francophone women had an average yearly income of $6,514 compared to $10,715 for unilingual anglophone women. Bilingual francophones earned $10,692 per year compared to $11,618 for bilingual anglophones.[97] This data shows that bilingualism is not an equalization factor for francophone women, which led the author of the study to comment that in New Brunswick, anglophones reap higher returns from their bilingualism than francophones do.

Another interesting fact is that anglophone men's income is almost twice that of francophone men. The wage gap is wider between anglophone men and women than the gap between francophone men and women: francophone women earn almost 60% of francophone men's income while anglophone women earn only 50% of what anglophone men earn.[98]

5.5 First Nations Women

According to the 1986 Census, there are 4,670 First Nations women in New Brunswick, representing 1% of all women in the province. Their labour market participation rate is 41% compared to 50% for the total female population. First Nations women earn $7,959 per year on average compared to $10,293 per year for the general female population. Only 8.8% of them earn $10,000 per year or more, yet their levels of education are only slightly lower than that of other New Brunswick women.[99]

Women who are of the First Nations peoples by birth earn even less than women whose Native Indian status is a result of marriage: they earn $6,727 and $8,863 respectively. First Nations women who lost their status by marrying a non-Indian and who wish to re-enter reserves through the provisions of Bill C-31 are not always welcome. The lack of housing and other community

resources causes resentment among others already living on reserves.

Why are these women's incomes so low? A survey done by Statistics Canada showed that the majority of Canadians don't think that the First Nations peoples deserve a better economic deal. There seems to be a misunderstanding of what are considered their "privileges". The same survey found that Atlantic Canadians are even less sympathetic to the plight of these peoples than other Canadians.[100] Such prejudices explain, at least in part, the difficulty First Nations women face in obtaining well-paid employment.

Given these attitudes, it's hardly surprising that First Nations women in New Brunswick have little chance of getting the jobs for which they are qualified. Because they are not considered capable of contributing to the province's economy or to their community's well-being, they suffer, from degradation of their collective self-image, as one of their spokespersons stated recently.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the federal government respect its commitment to First Nations women who have been reinstated as status Indians by allocating more money to reserves so that the women may re-enter the reserves.

5.6 Immigrant Women

There are 14,685 immigrant women in New Brunswick, representing 4% of all women in the province.[101] Of that number, 55% or 6,025 are not in the labour force, a higher percentage than that for the general female population in New Brunswick. The median earnings of immigrant women are $7,882 per year, which is slightly higher than the earnings of the general female population, which are $7,843 per year.

The earnings gap between immigrant men and immigrant women is very wide. Immigrant men have higher earnings than the average male earnings in New Brunswick and immigrant women earn only 41% of what immigrant men earn.[102]

Many immigrants are professionals whose socio-economic status is superior to the provincial average. However, there are large variations between different groups of immigrant women. For example, it is among immigrant women that we find the poorest women, particularly among those from the Third World who speak neither official language.

Immigrant women's linguistic difficulties are more serious than men's, a fact which complicates their entry in the labour force as well as in the community. It also makes them vulnerable to abuse from service providers or from potential employers. Unemployed women and those in subordinate jobs are not admitted to language training programs offered by Employment and Immigration Canada. Many consider this to be discrimination based on sex.

RECOMMENDATION:

That the federal government ensure that all immigrant women who wish to learn one of the official languages have access to basic language training.

5.7 Other Visible Minority Women

There is very little available data on visible minority women other than Native Indian women. We do know however that only 3.2% of the New Brunswick population reported an ethnic origin other than French and English during the 1986 Census.[103]

When compared to the total female population, visible minority women are over-represented in low-paid jobs and under-represented in upper echelon positions.[104] It is probably fair to assume that many of them work for less than minimum wage, such as domestic workers or those who are exploited through "under the table" work.

The unemployment rate for visible minority women is slightly higher than for the general female population.[105] These rates do not include those who have given up hope and are not looking for work.

CONCLUSION

The various obstacles to women's economic independence have one common trait, the sexual division of roles. The obstacles to women's economic independence are found throughout our social organization; they are inter-related and reinforce each other. Sexual roles are assigned in early childhood, in the home and are reinforced in schools, colleges, universities, in the workplace and everywhere else in society. The elimination of economic inequalities between women and men in New Brunswick will require corrective measures such as non-sexist education, pay equity and employment equity programs.

At the heart of the problem is the difficulty of balancing work and family responsibilities, and the unequal division of family responsibilities between men and women. The government must encourage employers to adopt practical measures to help their employees harmonize family and work responsibilities, and must make these measures equally available to men and women.

Only when women have advanced socially and economically will they be in a position to participate as equal partners in the decision-making process of social institutions such as family, culture, education, business or politics.

While the participation of women in the social structure must increase in number, there is also a need for changes in the structure itself. As women acquire influence within the structure, their vision of the world and their values will help make those changes possible.

Within the economic system, a better balance must be struck between the exploitation of resources and their renewal, between the freedom of the business sector and its responsibilities, between economic policies and social policies.

As we have said, the perception that social programs are a drain on the economy is false. On the contrary, they are part of a healthy economy. A healthy economic system is one that attempts to narrow the gap between rich and poor. The role of the state is to counterbalance the culture of inequality by promoting a culture of equality.

This is not the time for political institutions to retreat nor to capitulate before the giants of the economy. Now, more than ever, political institutions must actively exercise their power to regulate the economy so that society benefits everyone. A refusal by the state to intervene in the market economy constitutes an acceptance of the polarization between rich and poor, and in the longer

term, of social and economic disintegration. It's also an acceptance of the feminization of poverty. In combatting the polarization of social classes and assuming economic recovery, the government would also improve women's economic position. It is urgent that the government commit itself to removing the barriers to women's economic equality.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

To the provincial government:

1. That the Pay Equity Act be amended to protect all New Brunswick workers against wage discrimination.

2. That the provincial government ensure that working parents have access to affordable quality day-care services and that it increase its financial contribution to existing services.

3. That the provincial government extend its Employment Equity Program to Parts II, III and IV of the civil service and that it develop incentives for the private sector to do likewise; that the program be administered by a body independent of government and made up of representatives of women and other target groups, unions and human rights organizations; that the plan of action of each department be made public as well as the results of the program's application; that the agency responsible for the implementation of the program have the resources necessary to discipline any department which fails to meet the objectives of the program.

4. That in accordance with the principles of the Employment Standards Act, kindergarten employees be paid according to the same pay scales as other teachers in the school system.

To the Department of Labour:

1. That the provincial government organize a consciousness-raising campaign aimed at employers concerning the benefits of helping employees harmonize family and professional responsibilities by establishing day-care centres in the workplace or by contributing directly or indirectly to existing day-care services, by offering flexible hours of work or a reduced work week, information and counselling services for those experiencing m[illegible]al problems; these measures should be offered equally to men and women.

2. That the Employment Standards Act be amended to increase the minimum wage above the poverty level established by Statistics Canada.

3. That the Employment Standards Act be amended to stipulate that part-time employees and contract workers have a right to the same benefits and pay scales as full-time employees.

4. That the Employment Standards Act include 10 days paid leave per year for family responsibilities and to stipulate that employees be paid at the overtime wage rate after 40 hours of work in a week instead of 44 hours.

5. That the Department of Labour develop a policy of recognition of prior learning for New Brunswick workers in order to award formal value to skills acquired informally.

6. That the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission be given sufficient power and resources to initiate investigations and take the necessary disciplinary measures.

To the Department of Education:

1. That the Department of Education develop a rigorous program to combat sexism in the school system; that all teachers in the province be required to attend awareness workshops; that training programs for future teachers and guidance counsellors include a mandatory course on sexism; that the Department of Education ensure that all students in the province receive an education free of stereotypes; and that adolescents be made aware of the importance of economic independence for both women and men, and of the need for shared family responsibilities.

To the Department of Income Assistance:

1. That the Department of Income Assistance change its income assistance policies in order to encourage recipients to improve their situation; that rates of assistance be increased to the poverty level established by Statistics Canada.

2. That the Department of Income Assistance subsidize the real cost of day-care services for the recipients who are in training programs; that low-income families who are presently not receiving social assistance have access to the same training programs and to the financial assistance necessary.

To the Department of Justice:

1. That the Department of Justice require that all support agreements be registered and that the amount of support be based not only on the cost of raising children but also on the loss of income associated with family responsibilities.

2. That funding for the Civil Legal Aid Program be increased to ensure that low-income persons

have access to justice.

To the Department of Health and Community Services:

1. That the Department of Health and Community Services develop a policy aimed at eliminating stereotypes in day-care centres; and that it be included in early childhood education training programs.

2. That the Department of Health and Community Services offer more assistance to individuals who care for aged parents or disabled children, including respite care to protect caretakers' health.

To the New Brunswick Federation of Labour:

1. That unions and professional associations ensure that men and women are equally represented on their boards and committees and that special attention be given to family responsibilities and sexism.

To the federal government:

1. That the federal government's human resources strategy be based on a full employment strategy; that the allocation of funds be proportional to the levels of poverty within the provinces in order to encourage economic development of the more disadvantaged provinces and groups; that the regional management of training programs be delegated to committees made up not only of employers, but also of representatives of target groups, training institutions and agencies representing target groups, as well as community development officers and government officials involved in promoting social equality.

2. That the federal transfer payments be maintained at their current level, in order to avoid cuts in social programs that further impoverish poor provinces and individuals.

3. That domestic work be recognized in economic terms and included in the GNP as well as in all national economic data.

4. That pensions for the elderly be increased so that elderly women can be financially independent and live in dignity.

5. That the federal government respect its commitment to First Nations women who have been

reinstated as status Indians by allocating more money to reserves so that these women may re-enter the reserves.

6. That the federal government ensure that all immigrant women who wish to learn one of the official languages have access to basic language training.

General:

1. That universities and community colleges ensure that future day-care educators and workers are sensitized to the problems of stereotyping and the means of eliminating them.

2. That universities and community colleges in the province hire women's rights officers with the mandate to report to higher authorities all cases of sexual harassment by employees or students.

3. That special efforts be made to include businesswomen on the boards of chambers of commerce and industrial commissions; that a program of mentors be promoted for women who are newly appointed to positions of responsibility; that businesswomen be encouraged to build networks as a means of exchanging information, identifying common problems and finding solutions as a group, in order to foster mutual support in their respective initiatives.

4. That ACOA and the Research Institute for Regional Economic Development allocate an equitable proportion of their funds to women in business and to research aimed at improving their status.

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